

**LUCY FERGUSON**  
Yellow Window

**GENDER  
ACTION**

# Communicating gender equality policy in R&I and creating impact

**Day 1**

**18 / 02 / 20**



# Introductions

Please ask your partner:

- Name, role and institution
- What is currently your biggest challenge in implementing gender equality policies?

# **Session 1: Resistances to gender equality in research**

# Theorising Resistances

Theorising and categorising resistances is important, as it allows us to plan and act strategically according to the specific form and content of resistance

Action learning through previous face-to-face resistances workshops for structural change projects (SUPERA, Budapest, June 2019; Gender Equality Academy, Barcelona, November 2019; Gender SMART, Prague, January 2020) – currently compiling toolkit

# Key Sources

- FESTA Handbook on Resistance to Gender Equality in Academia <https://www.festa-europa.eu/public/handbook-resistance-gender-equality-academia>
- Lombardo and Mergaert (2016) “Resistance in Gender Training and Mainstreaming Processes”, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332398152\\_Resistance\\_in\\_Gender\\_Training\\_and\\_Mainstreaming\\_Processes](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332398152_Resistance_in_Gender_Training_and_Mainstreaming_Processes)
- Rao, Sandler, Kelleher and Miller (2016) Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organizations, <https://genderatwork.org/reflections/new-book/>

# CATEGORISATION – drawing on FESTA project

Causes and Indicators of  
Resistance (WHY?)

Forms and Symptoms of  
Resistance (HOW?)

Actors (WHO?)

# Causes and Indicators

## Part 1 (WHY?)

SENSITIVITIES AND RISKS -

Confidentiality, Insecurity, Anxiety;  
Mistrust; Loss of Face;

STATUS QUO - Threat to Job Status;  
Threat to Meritocracy; Conformity

LIMITED RESOURCES - Financial  
Resources; Human Resources; Time  
Burdens

# Causes and Indicators

## Part 2 (WHY?)

GENDERED AGENDA - Lack of Gender Awareness / Gender Blindness; Lack of Gender Awareness / Gender Blindness;

PROBLEMS RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY - Slow Improvement; Being Tired/ Feeling Hopeless; Changes of Personnel in Functional Roles; Illusion of Having Done Enough

PERSONAL TRAITS - Low Motivation/Lack of Interest; Low Priority; Lack of Engagement; Lack of Self-Confidence; Looking for Benefit/Profit





# Forms and Symptoms

## Part 1 (HOW?)

**ACTIVE/EXPLICIT:** hostility, sexist humour, devaluation and disparaging women's accomplishments or professional commitment, interrupting, denial of access to resources, etc.

**PASSIVE/IMPLICIT:** negative body language, foot dragging, inertia, chilly climate, making the procedures more difficult, giving less attention, uncomfortable social atmosphere, giving less access to institutional resources, discomfort, inappropriate treatment, etc.

# Forms and Symptoms

## Part 2 (HOW?)

**GENDER-SPECIFIC:** behaviour aimed to prevent an implementation for gender equality in the relevant institution

**NON-GENDER SPECIFIC:** does not specifically aim to curtail gender equality although it creates various kinds of obstacles for the project

# Actors Part 1 (WHO?)

**INDIVIDUAL:** types of resistance coming from a single person

**GROUP:** resistance emerging from a collection of individuals.

# Actors Part 2 (WHO?)

**PERSONAL:** associated with a person's/position holder's particular motives, traits, sensitivities, etc.

**INSTITUTIONAL:** occurs due to institutional culture or institution's legal or administrative procedures

# Activity: Categorising Resistances

For each example, taken from the FESTA Handbook:

Why? (SENSITIVITIES AND RISKS, STATUS QUO, LIMITED RESOURCES, GENDERED AGENDA, SUSTAINABILITY, PERSONAL TRAITS)

How? (ACTIVE/EXPLICIT, PASSIVE/IMPLICIT)

Who? (INDIVIDUAL, GROUP, PERSONAL, INSTITUTIONAL)

**Presentation and  
discussion by invited  
speakers:**

**“Please tell us about a  
challenging resistance you  
faced in your work, and  
how you addressed it”**

# **Session 2: Responding to resistances to gender equality in research**

# Discussion

- What resistances are you currently facing in implementing structural change?
- How do you currently respond to these?



# Activity: Resistances

## Role Plays

- Where does this take place?
- Who are the main characters?
- Who will play each character?
- How will the role play unfold?

# Reflection: Resistances

## Role Plays

- Is there anything useful here that you could use in dealing with resistances?
- What kinds of solutions arose from this role play?

**“We should celebrate as a success cases where the status quo has to start to work hard to reproduce itself and has to invest resources and energy in resisting gender change. The need for visible resistance to positive change is a success. It is evidence of the chipping away of patriarchy; it might be chipping away really slowly, but it is changing.”**

**(Mackay in Rao et al.)**

# Resistances and transformation

- Emerging literature on resistances as part of structural change for gender equality
- Persistent blockages to implementation of gender equality policies and programmes
- Resistances useful for understanding challenges and opportunities for institutional culture shift
- Engaging with resistances is essential for a gender-transformative approach

# **Session 3: Communicating gender equality**

**Presentation and  
discussion by invited  
speakers:**

**“Please tell us about a time  
when you successfully  
communicated the  
importance of gender  
equality/structural change”** UN

# Strategic framing

“Strategic framing” involves the purposeful use of this technique by policy-makers, social advocates, and communicators.

The goals of strategic framing are to convey meaning and to focus audience attention on particular parts of a message or aspects of a topic in order to gain a favorable response

# Activity: strategic framing



# Activity: resistances speed dating

**Session 3:  
Communicating gender  
equality to specific  
target audiences**

# Activity: Communicating gender equality to target audiences

- What are the key arguments against/resistances to gender equality from this audience?
- What is the reason behind these resistances? What are likely to be the most effective arguments for this audience? Select from the techniques for dealing with resistances already discussed, and the tools for communicating gender equality
- Develop a presentation for the rest of the group that portrays the key resistances and the arguments developed. Presentation can use the varied participatory methods that have been employed in the workshop – e.g. role play, visual, objects etc.

# **Presentations, evaluation and closing**

**Thank you!**

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